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Atari Online News, Etc.
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->From the Editor's Keyboard
"~~~~~"

"Saying it like it is!"

Well, summer is officially over in another 24 hours! Another summer, another year older. It's ironic, but every last day of summer falls a day or so after my birthday. I don't feel any older although the body can't do everything that I used to be able to do. A few more aches than normal, but those are things that we all seem to put up with over time.

Although there is still some good weather left here in New England to play some golf and do some more projects, it's time to think about ending my enjoyable "retirement" time. Somehow, I don't think I can convince my wife to take on a couple of more jobs! I'm also still considering starting to collect my pension early, but I'm not sure that's something I really want to tap into this early. We'll see.

So, instead of languishing over the end of another summer (I really do enjoy the autumn season also!), I'll just think about all of the fun I've had, as well as all that I've accomplished these past four months. So, let's get on with this week's issue!

Until next time...

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Well, another week has come and gone, and not only is it time to check out what's going on with the UseNet again, but we're a week closer to fall, a week closer to the holidays, and a week closer to the close of another year.

What does all of that have to do with this column? Nothing. Nothing at all. But I find it interesting that, as I get older, I tend to take less notice of the march of the days, weeks and seasons. One just tends to flow effortlessly into the next, and the older I get, the more natural that seems.

I think I've mentioned before that I had been hunting for the other

members of the editorial staff of my college newspaper. Well, this past week I finally made contact with the the last straggler. We're all accounted for now. Most of them were amazed that I was able to track them down after more than 25 years. Gawd! TWENTY FIVE YEARS!

I know, I know. Many of you were in college more than 25 years ago, but just shut up and give me my moment, okay? <grin.

Anyway, most of them were amazed that I had been able to track them down. Women who'd gotten married were usually harder to find than they guys, simply because guys keep their last names while women usually don't when they get married.

The key to tracking people down on the internet, as with any other venue or medium, is to think logically, have patience, and pray for a bit of luck.

It seems that, more and more these days, we depend on the last one while almost totally discounting for first two. I think that it's probably because the first two are things we have control over, while the third one is outside of our purview. If the first two fail us, it might be our fault... and we all know that that simply can't be. But the third one.... ah, the third one... if LUCK fails us, well, that's just not something that we have any real control over. So it's not our fault... we're blameless! We're VICTIMS!

Well, guess what, pilgrim... The Universe doesn't care if it's your fault or not. You pays your money and you takes your chance. I can't count the number of times I've heard people say, "I'd rather be lucky than good". Well sir, today you're lucky IF you're good at whatever it is.

Okay, that's enough, I guess. I'll step down off my soapbox now so that we can get to the 'STuff'.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
=====

Phantommm asks about the hard drive in his STacy:

"I have a STacy with a 20meg Conner Hard Drive which is the stock drive as far as I know. For some reason the drive isn't working.

The STacy works fine without the hard drive.

None of the Hard Drive software that I have tried such as, HD Driver, ICD, Atari, etc finds the hard drive! All say something like no drive/device found or similar.

Is there any software related problem such as deleting the Hard Drive Driver file that would cause this?

If so what would be the fix?

I have the STacy apart in case I need to replace the Hard Drive.

(By the way, I don't have any STacy system disks or a manual)
I do have another STacy here with hard drive that does work,

and would like to get the other hard drive fixed or replaced.

Does anyone know what type of Hard Drives will work as a replacement? Or are these one of a kind drives and I need to get a replacement from another STacy or a Dealer like BEST/B&C?"

Jan Honza tells Phantomm:

"The hard drive is SCSI. Any 50pin 3.5" SCSI II hard disk <=1GB should work. Bigger drives should also work, but the host adapter won't let you see more than the first 1GB."

Dr. Uwe Seimet, author of HD Driver, adds:

"If none of the drivers finds the drive there is most likely something wrong with the drive or the cables. If possible try if the drive works on another machine, in order to find out whether it's the drive that causes problems or something else.

I would expect any other drive of the same format to work."

Everyone's favorite techie, Alison, asks about LOGO:

"Would anyone have a link to one of the LOGO applications for the ST?"

'Charlie' tells Alison:

"I do not know what it is you are after. Do you need the programming language for the atari called"logo"? I also have manual/sourecode booklet for logo?"

Alison tells Charlie:

"Just looking for an executable. Found a book earlier with lots of Logo examples in it and it brought back memories.

Logo is a mathematical programming language which was developed for children in the 1970's.

I think there was actually an Atari version of Logo, much along the lines of ST BASIC. ST LOGO?"

Charles Richmond tells Aly:

"I seem to remember that the Atari ST LOGO was called DR LOGO. The DR was for Digital Research, the folks who developed GEM. I believe that Gary Killdahl himself wrote this for his kids to use back when."

Aly checks around and then posts:

"I found it; <http://www.atari.org/services/systemdisks.php>

What can I say; Buggy!! I keep on getting out of memory errors on a 4Mb

machine. Switched it to 1Mb (yes I have a switch) and still I get them.
Oh well. Short lived."

Paolo asks for help with mounting a Windows partition with MiNT:'

"I finally managed to setup my brand new Ethernet on MiNTnet. It works like a charm, but remember to put the LAN plug first ;-) (I lost half an hour trying to figure out what wasn't working...).

Now that I have network connectivity (pinging, browsing and all) I'd like to mount a share available on my NT server instead of FTPing it. I read a lot of docs while setting up MiNTnet, and now I forgot where I searched in the first place.

So:

Can you please tell me what is the procedure to mount (let's say as drive M:) a windows shared disk in my CT60+EtherNat+MiNT.

I remember that Samba is involved, but I can't remember the whole lot."

Jerome Mathevet tells Paolo:

"In Google, I typed "atari SMB client" and got this:

<http://www.myatari.net/issues/feb2002/samba.htm> "

That seems almost like cheating, don't it? <Grin>
Paolo tells Jerome:

"I already read it, but it doesn't mention a sort of "mounting" the device in order to be "seen" as a normal disk (and, no, Bnet didn't work for me)."

Jan Honza tells Paolo:

"t's not really the information that you want. The Sparemint Samba client is here:
<http://sparemint.atariforge.net/sparemint/html/packages/samba-client.html>

Install it and read the docs. You should remember that this is a unix port of samba, so you shouldn't have any problem finding information on the web.

If fact I'm going to install the client on my freemint system now....
I'll keep you posted.

Ok. This is the procedure.

You need to get the samba-common package from here (as well as the previously mentioned samba-client package):

<http://sparemint.atariforge.net/sparemint/html/packages/samba-common.html>

Install this one first with 'rpm -iv samba-common-3.0.1-1.m68kmint.rpm'
next install the client: 'rpm -iv samba-client-3.0.1-1.m68kmint.rpm'

You need to edit a couple of files. Look in /etc/samba for lmhosts and smb.conf

In smb.conf you need to change the workgroup name (default is 'MYGROUP') to whatever your windows box is set to (default is usually 'WORKGROUP'). Next look for the interfaces line. Take out the preceding ';' and change one of the IP address to your atari's IP, like this '192.168.0.5/24'. The /24 is the way it specifies the mask. This is equivalent to 255.255.255.0, so leave it as it is.

In the lmhosts file you can put the name of your windows box, and its IP address. This can make it easier to use it later.

Once you have done this you can test it with:

```
'smbclient -L <name of windows server> -U <name of share owner>'
```

I.e 'smbclient -L windozebox -U fred'

It will ask for 'freds' password, type it in and it will give you a list of all shares that are available. Then you can do a 'smbclient //windozebox/<share> -U fred' which will give you a prompt 'smb: \>' which is an FTP type interface. You can use this as you would an FTP client. See http://us5.samba.org/samba/docs/using_samba/ch05.html for more information.

Once this is all working fine, you can mount the windows share as a directory. The only thing is, I'm not sure how to do that, as I can't find an smbmount program anywhere... and I have run out of time today."

Paolo tells Jan:

"Samba is working like a charm! (no device mount, though!) unfortunately, for the desktop kind of work, it is not suitable: aFTP is extremely better integrated. I know, Samba is modern, powerful, and doesn't need an ftp server working on the other side. however, aFTP is more user-friendly.

Now let's talk about Sharity-light (jan, this could interest you as well). Maybe I just don't get it, but it stays forever 'waiting' and then ends up with an 'unknown host' message.

Is it possible that it doesn't need a config file? or maybe it should point to smb config file? I am puzzled and stuck about this."

Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

=~==~==

->In This Week's Gaming Section - Gaming's Effects On Kids Study!

***** XBOX 360 Goes High-Def!
PS3 Price Slashed!
And much more!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

Senate To Study Gaming's Effects on Kids

We've been hearing for years about the effects of TV, movies, and gaming on children, with various politicians weighing in on the matter when their campaigns needed a boost.

However, it seems that the Senate has finally decided, once and for all, to try figure out just what effect (if any) media has on children. The Children Media Research and Advancement (CAMRA) Act authorizes new research into the effects of viewing and using electronic media, including TV, computers, the 'net, and video games on kids' cognitive, social, physical, and psychological development.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will work with the National Institutes of Health on the study, which will take place over the next six years, and will examine the impact of media on both young children and adolescents.

CAMRA was first introduced in May of 2004 by Senator Hillary Clinton. "For many years I have worked to help educate parents on how to keep their children safe as they grow up immersed in interactive, digital, and wireless media that is constantly changing," the senator said. "The passage of the CAMRA Act is one more step in the right direction."

Sony Slashes Price Tag For Delay-Hit PlayStation 3

Sony Corp. slashed the planned price of its delay-hit PlayStation 3 by one-fifth in Japan, preparing for a fierce fight against cheaper games consoles from rivals Microsoft and Nintendo.

Sony cut the retail price of the standard PS3 with a 20-gigabyte hard disc to 49,980 yen (430 dollars) ahead of a November 11 domestic launch - just in time for the crucial year-end holiday shopping season.

"We wanted to offer a sense of affordability to Japanese game players," said a spokeswoman for Sony Computer Entertainment Friday.

The announcement, made at the Tokyo Game Show near the capital, comes as Sony struggles to shore up investor confidence after a series of delays to the PS3 and a spate of embarrassing recalls of its computer batteries.

"This is unprecedented for a big manufacturer to be cutting prices before a product release. It shows how much Sony is under pressure," said Hiroshi Kamide, a game analyst at KBC Securities Japan.

Investors responded nervously to news of the price cut, which will make it even harder for Sony to recoup the PS3's huge development and production costs.

Even after the price reduction the PS3 will still be the most expensive of the three main next-generation video games consoles on the market.

Nintendo Co. Ltd will launch its new Wii game machine in December at 25,000 yen while Microsoft plans to cut the price of its already launched Xbox 360 to 29,800 yen on November 2.

"Even if the PS3 is more of a family entertainment centre than a games console, I think the price was too high," said Kengo Uchibori, a strategic planner at Japanese video game developer Square Enix.

"Now, at less than 50,000 yen, I'm much more likely to buy one," said Uchibori, one of 160,000 visitors expected at the three-day Tokyo Game Show which got underway Friday just east of the capital.

Sony has long dominated the home video-game market and shipments of the PlayStation 2 console have topped 100 million since March 2000.

However, Nintendo leads the global market in portable game machines and is taking aim at Sony's lead in stand-alone consoles by promoting its new machine, Wii, (pronounced 'We') as a family-friendly machine.

It has also caused a stir with an innovative new handset shaped like a television remote control and engineered with motion sensors and speakers.

Sony meanwhile aims to ship six million PS3 consoles globally in the fiscal year to March 2007 and still has a solid customer base in Japan.

"I was planning to buy one anyway," said Satoshi Mochizuki, a 29-year-old freelance writer attending the show.

"Since I'm a racing fan, I want to play the best racing game and the PS3 is the best at that," he added.

Sony, which is recovering from a profit slump, said the price tag of the high-end version featuring a 60-gigabyte hard disc will also be lowered but did not disclose the reduced price.

It maintained its planned retail price of 499 dollars for the standard PS3 in the United States ahead of the November launch there.

The success of the PS3 is considered vital to a revival at Sony, which under its first foreign boss Howard Stringer is in the midst of major restructuring including 10,000 job cuts.

Sony was forced to delay the global launch of the PS3 by about six months until November this year, giving the Xbox 360 a one-year head start.

The company spooked investors again earlier this month by announcing a fresh delay until March 2007 to the rollout of the PS3 in Europe, Russia, the Middle East, Africa and Australasia.

The move added to worries about Sony's production operations after US computer makers Dell and Apple Computer last month announced recalls of millions of potentially hazardous Sony computer batteries.

Xbox 360 Goes High-Def

Microsoft is taking its Xbox 360 game console to the next level with the introduction of a high-definition video player that promises to draw players into the action and deliver sights and sounds that surpass anything available today.

The software giant announced its Xbox 360 HD DVD add-on player on the home turf of Japanese gaming giants Sony and Nintendo, both of whom are poised to deliver next-generation consoles.

Microsoft also said that later this year it will provide a software upgrade so that Xbox 360 consoles can handle both games and movies in high-definition, 1080p resolution.

And to get the ball rolling, the company is releasing more than 100 high-definition games, including Microsoft's own "Blue Dragon" title, "Lost Planet: Extreme Condition" from Capcom, and "Dead or Alive: Xtreme 2" from Tecmo. An array of classic arcade games like "Pac-Man" will be provided in new versions as well.

The new player will list for about \$170 when it debuts in Japan in November and will come with an Xbox 360 universal media remote. The console should be available in the U.S. by the end of the year. In addition, Microsoft announced that its fall software update, scheduled for release later this year, will allow all Xbox 360 consoles around the world to output game and movie content in 1080p resolution.

"For game-players, the HD output will give sharper images, greater realism and more immersion," said Forrester Research analyst Paul Jackson. "It also means that, in theory at least, the Xbox 360 is keeping up with the image resolution promised by Sony's PS3."

But, Jackson noted, the Xbox 360 still only has analog video outputs, so all high-definition output will be slightly muddier since it has to pass through inferior cables. It's the same issue associated with the lower-cost PS3. "It's not going to look as good on a nice 42-inch plasma TV with 1080p resolution, as it would on a dedicated HD DVD or a Blu-ray player," he said.

By adding this HD DVD player to Xbox 360, Microsoft is keeping pace with Sony and its PlayStation 3 console that uses the alternate Blu-ray high-definition DVD format, which arrives in U.S. stores in November. As proposed, a souped-up version of the high-end Xbox 360 will cost about the same (\$500) as the basic PS3.

The PS3 launch has twice been pushed back by Sony, which will now deliver only 2 million consoles, instead of the 4 million originally announced, by the end of the year in the U.S. and Japan.

For its part, Nintendo is forgoing high-definition video technology in the Wii console and relying instead on a lower-cost (\$250), user-friendly machine that is aimed at novices rather than gaming aficionados.

"This levels the playing field somewhat with the PS3, especially in the HD-dominated Japanese market," Jackson said. "The HD DVD drive is a very reasonably priced add-on, with an Xbox 360 plus HD DVD drive still being cheaper than a PS3."

It also represents a feather in the cap for Toshiba and others supporting the HD DVD format that are waging a pitched battle with Sony and the Blu-ray camp to determine the future of high-definition DVD technology.

EA Announces SKATE for Playstation 3 and Xbox 360

The closest thing to being on a skateboard, Electronic Arts announced that Skate will be released for the PlayStation3 system and the Xbox 360 video game and entertainment system in 2007. Skate will deliver the feel of skating through innovative controls, authentic cameras and a fully reactive skateboarding city. The game features professional skaters such as Danny Way and PJ Ladd, as well as a reactive city and relevant in-game cameras that capture and deliver the most authentic skateboard videogame experience to date.

"Our game offers a skate mecca for both skaters and gamers in search of the definitive authentic skating video game experience," said Scott Blackwood, executive producer, EA Black Box. "We're focused on capturing the actual feeling of skating with the innovative control system, the physics driven animations, and the intelligent cameras working together to really deliver the closest thing to being on a board."

Skate's unique control scheme captures the true feel of skating versus the typical button mashing gameplay of past skating games. Featuring physics-driven animations, gamers will have a unique gaming experience every time they pick up the controller since no two tricks will ever be the same.

Developed by EA Black Box in Vancouver, British Columbia, Skate will deliver all the style, fun, creativity and culture of skateboarding without the countless hours of practice, broken bones and hospital visits. Skate has not yet been rated by the ESRB.

'Rising' Fun Way To Kill Zombies

A workout is certainly one way to burn off some excess anxiety after a long, stressful day at work. For wound-up video gamers, though, it's a lot more fun to fire up the console and plow through endless waves of zombies.

"Dead Rising" (Rated M, \$59.99, Xbox 360) delivers the chance to do just that, but its one terrible design decision often makes the experience more infuriating than pleasurable.

Let's start with what's so good: it's a zombie game! Duh. "Dead Rising" in particular redefines crowd control, throwing up hundreds of lumbering corpses at once on-screen and a sickly hilarious selection of impromptu weapons.

You play as Frank West, a sneering freelance photojournalist who helicopters into a small Colorado town overcome with zombies. He has 72 hours (these are faster game hours, not real hours) to snap some good pictures and escape with a decent story. Top that, Geraldo!

The gameplay occurs in a quintessential American setting: the suburban shopping mall. Though, in this case, chopping mall might be more apt. You'll have access to a wide array of products to smash those nasty former humans.

Pistols and crowbars certainly get the job done, but there are even more effective tools if you can find them, such as snowblowers. (I'll spare you the details).

The zombies may be mindless, but in such large groups it doesn't take long to be surrounded by hundreds of them.

The Willamette Parkview Mall houses a multitude of retail zones that serve as different levels, and you'll meet quite a few trapped shoppers who will assign missions for experience points.

The stores offer the game's greatest perk: a diverse array of weapons.

Basically, anything you can pick up is a potential weapon. As a result, there are so many ways to kill the zombies it never gets old (though perhaps a bit too mindless for some).

One thing's inevitable: you will be overwhelmed by hungry zombies at some point. And you will die.

Hopefully, you remembered to save.

For some unimaginable reason, "Dead Rising" only provides for one game save on the console's hard drive.

Worse, you can't save wherever you please. Instead, you have to run back to the start of the game (and wait through a litany of long loading screens) or find a restroom to record your progress. It's this kind of game design decision that really kills the fun in an otherwise decent, lighthearted zombie game.

Two and a half stars out of four.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

'Laser Chips' Could Replace Wires in Your PC

Researchers from Intel and the University of California at Santa Barbara have found a way to build low-cost "laser chips" that could eventually

shuttle data around PCs at much higher speeds than today's copper wire interconnects.

The researchers combined the properties of a compound semiconductor material called indium phosphide, which emits light constantly, and silicon, which can be used to amplify and direct that light. They sandwiched the materials together to create a single device that can be manufactured using standard chip-making techniques.

The breakthrough, announced today, is significant because it could help the interconnect technologies that carry data between components in PCs and servers keep pace with the rapid advances in the processing power of the chips themselves, the researchers said.

"This could bring low-cost, terabit-level optical 'data pipes' inside future computers and help make possible a new era of high-performance computing applications," said Mario Paniccia, director of Intel's Photonics Technology Lab, in a statement.

The work may be several years away from commercialization, but the researchers expect eventually to be able to put dozens or even hundreds of lasers on a single chip, they said.

Indium phosphide is already widely used to make lasers for fiber-optic networks, but the cost of assembling and aligning the lasers makes them too expensive for the high-volume PC business. Silicon, on the other hand, can amplify and control light and could be used more affordably, but it is not an efficient generator of light itself.

The researchers figured out a way to combine the two materials to build a "hybrid silicon laser" that can be manufactured using Intel's standard manufacturing techniques, keeping costs relatively low.

To make the silicon laser, they created a thin oxide layer roughly 25 atoms thick on the surface of each material. They then heated the oxide and pressed the two layers together, forming a single chip with a "glass glue" between them. Applying a voltage to the device generates light from the indium phosphide, which passes through the joining layer to be guided and controlled by the silicon.

The laser light can send data between computer components at extremely high speed. This can be done using a "silicon optical modulator," which effectively turns the laser beam on and off at very high speeds to represent the 1s and 0s of computer code.

Intel has already demonstrated a silicon modulator that can transmit data at up to 10 gigabits per second. Figuring out how to make the hybrid silicon laser was the last big barrier to using silicon-based optical devices in computers and data centers, the researchers said.

That capability becomes more pressing as engineers design processors with multiple cores - just two or four today but tens or hundreds in the near future, Paniccia said during a conference call with reporters.

"That type of terascale computing will need terascale information moving into and out of servers to keep the chips fed with data, which is extremely difficult to do on copper," he said.

Most data moving farther than 100 meters travels over optical cables today, but the high cost of photonics prohibits its use for shorter distances,

where copper prevails for data connections within rooms or between motherboards, Paniccia said.

"What we're been working on is to siliconize photonics, bringing volume economics to optical communications," he said. "It's comparable to the breakthrough from the vacuum tube to the first planar integrated circuit, in that it allows you to build things at a size and cost that fundamentally weren't available before."

Once engineers can use a low-cost, high-bandwidth optical interconnect, they will be able to create entirely new computer designs, such as remote memory, a design that stores data up to 2 feet away from a processor instead of the current standard of 6 inches, he said. That architecture would radically change the cooling requirements and form factors of computer design.

As a next step, the researchers must find easier ways to manufacture this electrically pumped hybrid silicon laser, and then figure out how to combine it on a single chip with a standard computing processor, he said. Once they achieve that, binary data will be able to flow as electrons, then protons, and back again, enabling enormous rates of speed and efficiency.

Adobe Acrobat Reader Upgrades, Adds New Tricks

Adobe is transforming its popular Acrobat Reader software into a multimedia tool.

The Reader sits on more than 500 million PCs and has become the industry standard for viewing digital documents.

It has been revamped thanks to Adobe's acquisition of Macromedia in late 2005. The innovative software firm was best known for its Flash software, which also resides on most PCs to enable viewing of fast-loading video on websites.

Acrobat 8, the software that companies and small businesses use to create popular PDF digital documents, will be announced Monday. Expect the new Reader to load faster, offer a streamlined look and include Web-conferencing tools complete with video.

Joe Wilcox, an analyst at JupiterResearch, says most consumers use PDFs at least once a week. "Many instruction manuals are now in PDF, government forms, and schools use them to display their class schedules."

Adobe, the \$2 billion company that also makes industry-leading photo/video-editing tools Photoshop and Premiere, last updated Acrobat in January 2005. Acrobat represents 25% of Adobe's annual revenue and sells for \$299 to \$499.

The new Acrobat 8 and Reader are expected to be available in mid-October.

"There's still a lot of paper sold in the world, and the opportunity to digitize it all is massive," says Tom Hale, senior vice president of Adobe's Knowledge Worker unit. "We're just scratching the surface."

After Adobe acquired Macromedia, it turned to former Macromedia executive Hale to oversee the revamp. Hale ran Macromedia's Dreamweaver Web

publishing tool division. He says the new Acrobat was finished when he moved to Adobe but that the team was open to tweaking the interface.

"We said, 'Let's modernize it,' and everybody got aboard," says Hale. "We took Adobe's expertise with engineering and Macromedia's design, and we all worked together seamlessly."

Issues tackled:

- * The No. 1 complaint from consumers about PDFs is that they are slow to load, but Hale says those issues have been addressed with the new version.

- * Macromedia's Breeze software for Web conferencing is now built into Acrobat (and renamed Acrobat Connect). It lets companies use the Internet for meetings, sharing documents and commenting on them.

Adobe charges monthly fees starting at \$39 for the Web-conference service.

Version 8 shows that Adobe is making the transition to "a new concept of what PDF is," says Wilcox.

Adobe's challenge is fighting off Microsoft, which says it will offer PDF creation for free in a new version of Microsoft Office scheduled for next year.

Adobe CEO Bruce Chizen says Adobe had been anticipating the move by Microsoft for some time and isn't concerned. "That's why we've been adding more capabilities, like collaboration features and digital signatures into Acrobat, so that it's not just PDF creation."

Gene Munster, an analyst at equity firm Piper Jaffray, says 80% of Adobe's customers tend to upgrade with new versions. "Their workflow is dependent upon it," he says. "They stay up-to-date because the software is such an important part of their business."

Chizen says Reader, first introduced in 1993, didn't take off until the advent of the Internet. The company lost "tens of millions of dollars" on Acrobat but refused to give up. The Web "made it obvious that there was no way to reliably distribute documents that were more than one page, and that accelerated the need for the PDF."

Tweaked Firefox Lets You Surf Internet Without A Trace

A tweaked version of Firefox that makes Web browsing anonymous has been released by a group of privacy-minded coders.

Every few minutes, the Torpark browser causes a computer's IP address to appear to change. IP addresses are numeric identifier given to computers on the Internet. The number can be used along with other data to potentially track down a user, as many Web sites keep track of IP addresses.

Torpark's creators, a group of computer security gurus and privacy experts named Hactivismo, said they want to expand privacy rights on the Internet as new technologies increasingly collect online data.

The browser is free to download at torpark.nfshost.com. It's a modified

version of Portable Firefox, an optimized version of the browser that can be run off a USB memory stick on a computer.

The Torpark browser uses encryption to send data over The Onion Router, a worldwide network of servers nicknamed "Tor" set up to transfer data to one another in a random, obscure fashion.

Internet traffic, such as Web site requests, carries information on where it came from and where it's going. But that's muddled using Tor, which has been endorsed by the Electronic Frontier Foundation, and is hard to trace back to a source.

One minor downside is that surfing with Torpark is slower than with a typical browser over the same connection.

Torpark cautions that data sent from the last Tor server to the Web site is encrypted. Since only the user's connection is anonymous, Torpark advises that sensitive data such as username and passwords should only be used when the browser displays a golden padlock, a sign that a Web site is using encryption.

Torpark's user interface appears similar to Firefox with a few changes. It shows the current IP address that would be seen by Web sites in the lower right hand corner, and features a special "Flush Tor" button to reset a new, random server connection.

A test of Torpark using a computer in London employed IP addresses of servers registered in Berlin and Madison, Wisconsin.

Al Gore's Current TV, Yahoo Join Forces

Al Gore's Current TV is going into partnership with Yahoo, Inc. to create four new broadband channels that debuted on Wednesday with a video made by Bono during U2's last concert tour.

Like the Current TV network that the former vice president created with Joel Hyatt, the new broadband channels will focus on disseminating video created by young viewers.

"We expect this will be the premier video online experience," Gore told The Associated Press.

One of the four channels, Yahoo! Current Buzz, is being produced by Madeleine Smithberg, co-creator of "The Daily Show," and will "showcase the best of what's buzzing the world and the Web," the companies said.

The other channels will focus on action sports news, automotives and adventure traveling. The latter is where Bono's video - mostly about experiences with fellow band member The Edge - is being featured.

Yahoo was attracted to Current because it shares the goal of giving young people a voice on the Web, said Dan Rosensweig, Yahoo's chief operating officer.

The four channels are separate and distinct from Current's TV network, Gore said. But with Current only available now in 30 million of the nation's 110 million homes with televisions, the deal promises to greatly increase

the visibility of its content.

"The distribution reach and community of online viewers that Yahoo serves gives an unparalleled opportunity to connect the online video experience, including video-related content, with a mass audience," Gore said.

The best user-created videos on the Yahoo! Current Network will be featured on Current TV each Monday afternoon.

Four more Yahoo! Current channels are expected to be added by the end of next year, the companies said.

Facebook In Talks To Sell Itself To Yahoo

Social-networking Web site Facebook.com is in serious talks to sell itself to Internet media company Yahoo Inc. for an amount that could approach \$1 billion, The Wall Street Journal reported on Thursday.

Facebook, which has been at the center of takeover rumors for months, also held separate discussions with Microsoft Corp., the world's largest software maker, and media conglomerate Viacom over the past year, the Journal reported, citing people familiar with the matter.

In March, BusinessWeek reported that the company had turned down a \$750 million offer and hoped to fetch as much as \$2 billion in a sale. It has been separately reported that Viacom held talks to buy Facebook.

Social networking sites typically allow users to create and share blogs, pictures and videos with friends and the wider public.

Facebook caters primarily to U.S. college students but recently announced plans to open its site to admit outsiders.

The sector drew investor attention when News Corp. bought MySpace for \$580 million last year, and General Electric Co.'s NBC Universal bought women's online network iVillage for \$600 million earlier this year.

Yahoo has built a strategy of drawing Internet users and advertising through building community-based services on the Web, but acquisitions so far have been on a small scale.

Microsoft has cultivated a following among young video-gamers with its Xbox consoles and has built an Internet video-sharing service to lure Web advertising dollars.

Meanwhile, Viacom, under recently ousted Chief Executive Tom Freston, was viewed as being less aggressive than its rivals at pursuing its Internet strategy aimed at young audiences. The company's new CEO, Philippe Dauman, said this week he was looking at small acquisitions, but "only if they complement what we're doing internally."

Facebook, based in Palo Alto, California, was founded by Harvard student Mark Zuckerberg and two fellow students with an eye toward creating casual but semi-exclusive networks of friends - and friends of friends.

It took off on college campuses in the wake of the rapid rise and subsequent decline of Friendster, the pioneering social network in 2004.

In two years, it has become the primary online meeting place for a generation of U.S. college students.

Thursday's Wall Street Journal article quoted Zuckerberg as saying: "I would never say that at no point in the future would we go public or become part of a larger company ... but what I would say is, it's not our priority."

Yahoo Inc. Defending Its Internet Turf

As its rivals create a bigger buzz on the Internet, Yahoo Inc. is hitting television and radio airwaves to remind people that its Web site remains on the cutting edge of technology and culture.

The advertising blitz, scheduled to begin Thursday, marks the Sunnyvale, Calif.-based company's biggest marketing push in two years.

Besides buying TV and radio time, world's most popular Web site also will be spreading its messages in movie theaters across the United States.

As an added promotional gift, Yahoo will offer coupons for a free cup of coffee at Dunkin' Donuts to anyone who sets Yahoo.com as their home page this Friday.

Yahoo executives bill the multimillion dollar campaign as a celebration of several significant improvements to its Web site, including a makeover of the home page, an e-mail upgrade and a service that enables users to tap into their collective knowledge to find answers to tough questions.

"This is a great time for us to talk to our customers and encourage them to visit the new Yahoo.com," said Allen Olivo, Yahoo's vice president of global brand marketing. "It's an invitation to come back to those who haven't been using us in a while as well as to those who haven't been using us as frequently as they once did."

But the push also reflects the mounting pressure on Yahoo as it struggles to catch up to Google Inc. in the lucrative online search market. Yahoo is also battling perceptions that startups such as MySpace.com have become hipper places to hang out.

Meanwhile, old standbys like Microsoft Corp. and Time Warner Inc.'s AOL are spending heavily to lure traffic away from Yahoo.

"Yahoo is probably feeling some erosion of its brand," said Brad Scott, director of digital branding for San Francisco consulting firm Landor Associates. "They probably want to build some awareness again."

Yahoo claims 412 million users. Last month it attracted nearly 107 million unique U.S. visitors, more than any other online destination, according to Nielsen/NetRatings.

But Yahoo's search engine lags Google's, both for processing requests and distributing ads that will produce revenue-generating clicks - problems that have depressed the company's stock. Yahoo shares ended last week at \$29.32, marking a 25 percent decline since the end of last year.

Through July, Google held a 44 percent share of the U.S. search market

compared to 29 percent for Yahoo, according to comScore Media Metrix. At the same time in the previous year, Google's lead on Yahoo was only six percentage points.

Mountain View-based Google is far richer, with a market value of \$127 billion and about \$10 billion in cash. Yahoo has a market value of \$39 billion and about \$2.7 billion in cash.

To make things worse, Google has become synonymous with looking things up on the Internet without having to spend on expensive TV and radio ads.

"Instead of worrying about branding, Google is able to spend time and money on building better algorithms to help people find information and data," said Regis McKenna, who helped steer the marketing campaigns of high-tech Apple Computer Inc. and Intel Corp.

Google spends heavily to promote its search engine, but it generally eschews traditional advertising channels.

The Mountain View, Calif.-based company announced in May that it would bundle some of its software on Dell Inc.'s personal computers so Google wouldn't have to rely on users downloading its software from the Internet. Financial terms were not disclosed, but analysts estimated that Google could pay up to \$1 billion for a three-year deal.

"Google is a very media savvy company," Scott said. "They realize a prime spot on a computer or a Web site can be just as critical as a 30-second spot on prime-time television."

While Google has been winning the search showdown, News Corp.'s youthful MySpace.com has been threatening to dethrone Yahoo as the most viewed site.

In August, Web surfers pulled up 32.7 billion Yahoo pages, up from 31.5 billion pages a year ago, Nielsen/NetRatings said. Meanwhile, the viewership at MySpace nearly tripled to 27.3 billion pages.

Yahoo's decision to turn to television and radio to protect and expand its Internet turf seems ironic.

"I can't say if it's good or bad, but I do know it's not the wave of the future," McKenna said.

Yahoo's Olivo defended the strategy, saying: "We live in a multimedia world and we want to be wherever are customers are."

U.S. Government To Keep Control of Web Domain Group ICANN

The U.S. Commerce Department said on Wednesday it would renew its authority over the company that manages Internet domain names beyond September 30, when the U.S. government had been expected to permanently cede control.

"We're in discussions on amending and extending it, and some time between now and (September 30) I expect us to do that," John Kneuer, an acting assistant secretary of commerce, told Reuters after a Senate Commerce Committee hearing.

The end of the month is the expiration date for the government's memorandum

of understanding with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).

The existing three-year agreement had been intended to be the last, after which the U.S. government would give up control over addresses such as ".com" and country domain names such as ".cn" for China.

Kneuer said he expects the extension to the agreement to last between one and three years.

While the U.S. government is still committed to giving up control in the long term, the extension must be long enough to resolve what Kneuer described as broad issues over ICANN's "accountability and transparency."

Some foreign critics have urged the U.S. government to give up control of ICANN, saying it has too much influence over what is now a global commerce, communications and social engine.

Under the existing agreement, the U.S. government can control domain name policies, and is believed to have played a role in ICANN's refusal to create a ".xxx" domain for pornography sites this year. The European Commission accused U.S. officials of political interference in the decision.

Kneuer told the committee he had not consulted with foreign governments on the length of the extension.

One area of potential conflict between the U.S. government and ICANN is the future of "Whois" databases, directories in which Web site owners identify themselves. The databases are publicly available on the Internet and allow anyone to see who owns a domain name.

ICANN is considering changes to Whois requirements to restrict access and protect the privacy of site operators.

But the U.S. Federal Communications Commission, among other U.S. and international law enforcement and regulatory bodies, say they need access to the Whois data to do their jobs.

"The future of ICANN is really on the line here," Federal Trade Commissioner Jon Leibowitz told the Senate panel.

"For the past decade we have used Whois databases in virtually all of our Internet investigations. It is often one of the first tools we use to identify wrongdoers," he said.

Leibowitz said a move by ICANN to restrict Whois data could jeopardize the ability of law enforcement bodies to stop spam, spyware and identity theft.

Kneuer agreed the Whois database is "essential" for law enforcement officials to use in investigations.

House Panel Approves Electronic Surveillance Bill

A U.S. House of Representatives Committee has approved a controversial bill that would broaden the U.S. government's ability to conduct electronic surveillance on U.S. residents by making it easier for federal law

enforcement officials to get court-issued warrants.

The Electronic Modernization Surveillance Act, opposed by several privacy groups, would also allow federal law enforcement officials to spy on U.S. residents for up to 90 days without a court order in the period after a terrorist attack. The House Judiciary Committee approved the legislation Wednesday by a 20-16 vote, with all committee Democrats present voting against the bill.

The bill, sponsored by Representative Heather Wilson (R-New Mexico), would reduce the amount of information required from federal agents applying for a wiretapping warrant from the U.S. Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court. The bill would clarify that the U.S. government can seek wiretaps on any type of electronic communication, not just telephone- or radio-spectrum-based communication.

Republicans praised the bill, saying it will help the U.S. government fight terrorism. The bill will provide the U.S. intelligence agencies "greater agility and flexibility as they try to thwart our determined and dangerous terrorist enemies," Committee Chairman James Sensenbrenner (R-Wisconsin) said in a statement.

The full House is expected to vote on the bill by the end of the month. The committee's action comes after President George Bush called on Congress to approve a controversial electronic surveillance program conducted by the U.S. National Security Agency. The NSA has conducted the program, reportedly targeting U.S. residents speaking with foreigners who have suspected terrorism connections, without getting court warrants.

Bush has asked Congress to authorize the NSA program to ward off multiple court challenges against it. In August, a U.S. judge in Michigan ruled the NSA program is illegal and must be halted. The Bush administration has appealed that ruling.

The Senate Judiciary Committee approved three surveillance bills last week. The Center for Democracy and Technology, a privacy and civil liberties advocacy group, called the Wilson bill and the Senate's National Security Surveillance Act two of the worst bills now in Congress.

"Couched in the seemingly laudable terms of 'modernization,' the bills would radically undermine the privacy of innocent Americans - not just by legitimizing the administration's warrantless surveillance programs - but by granting this and future administrations even broader authority to spy on Americans in the United States without judicial review," the CDT said on its Web site.

Feds Shut Down Illegal Spammers

The U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has shut down four illegal e-mail spamming operations, including one that offered the opportunity to "date lonely wives," the agency said Thursday.

Two of the other operations sending unwanted commercial e-mail hijacked the computers of third parties and used them to spam customers with sexually explicit e-mail, the FTC said Thursday.

The FTC charged the four operations with violating the U.S. CAN-SPAM Act.

Federal courts in Illinois and Arizona approved the FTC request to shut down the operations.

Cleverlink Trading and its partners will give up \$400,000 in spam-related gains to settle FTC charges that e-mail from them or their affiliates violated federal law. The FTC sued the group, saying their "date-lonely-wives" spam violated nearly every provision of the CAN-SPAM Act.

Cleverlink's e-mail contained misleading headers and deceptive subject lines, it did not contain a link to allow consumers to opt out of receiving future spam, did not contain a valid physical postal address and did not contain the disclosure that it was sexually explicit, the FTC said.

It also included sexual materials in the initially viewable area of the e-mail, in violation of the FTC's adult labeling rule. The U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division halted the operation and froze the defendants' assets. The court approved a settlement with Cleverlink and four other defendants in July.

In a second case, the FTC charged that Zachary Kinion sent spam hawking adult sites, mortgage rates and privacy software and paid other spammers commissions to send spam messages for him. Kinion hid his true originating address by routing his spam through the computers of innocent third parties, the FTC said.

The FTC charged him with violations of the CAN-SPAM Act, and the Illinois court ordered him to halt his e-mail operations. A settlement, which the FTC agreed to in June, includes a judgment of \$151,000, suspended because of Kinion's inability to pay, the FTC said.

Another spam operation used spam zombies--computers used without their owners' knowledge - to conceal the source of sexually explicit spam. Defendants William Dugger, Angelina Johnson and John Vitale also violated the adult labeling rule, the FTC said.

The settlement, approved in July by the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona, requires the three defendants to give up \$8,000 in spam-related profits, and it requires them to obtain permission from other people's computers before using them to send e-mail.

The fourth spam operation used spam to drive traffic to Web sites by third parties, the FTC said. Brian McMullen, doing business as BM Entertainment and B Pimp, routed his promotions for pharmaceuticals and adult content through unwitting consumers' computers, the FTC said.

A settlement approved by the Illinois court in July imposes a judgment of \$24,193, suspended based on McMullen's inability to pay, the FTC said. In addition, he has pleaded guilty to criminal charges related to spam and unauthorized possession of credit cards. He currently is awaiting sentencing.

Cyber Crime Becoming More Organized

Cyber scams are increasingly being committed by organized crime syndicates out to profit from sophisticated ruses rather than hackers keen to make an online name for themselves, according to a top U.S. official.

Christopher Painter, deputy chief of the computer crimes and intellectual property section at the Department of Justice, said there had been a distinct shift in recent years in the type of cyber criminals that online detectives now encounter.

"There has been a change in the people who attack computer networks, away from the 'bragging hacker' toward those driven by monetary motives," Painter told Reuters in an interview this week.

Although media reports often focus on stories about teenage hackers tracked down in their bedroom, the greater danger lies in the more anonymous virtual interlopers.

"There are still instances of these 'lone-gunman' hackers but more and more we are seeing organized criminal groups, groups that are often organized online targeting victims via the Internet," said Painter, in London for a cyber crime conference.

Typically these groups engage in ID theft, carding (the illegal use of bank cards) and so-called Botnet armies where hundreds sometimes thousands of computers are taken over and used to infect other machines.

Precise figures on the global cost of online crimes are hard to pin down, in part because some organizations prefer to keep quiet rather than publicize that their networks have been successfully attacked.

In other cases companies and individuals are unaware they have been defrauded.

The FBI estimates all types of computer crime in the U.S. costs industry about \$400 billion while in Britain the Department of Trade and Industry said computer crime had risen by 50 percent over the last two years.

"Because crimes are committed online a lot of people still don't understand what is happening," said Painter.

A growing worry is that cyber crooks could target emergency services for extortion purposes or that terrorists may be tempted to attack critical utility networks like water and electricity.

Painter said there was a recent case in the U.S. where two young hackers inadvertently switched off all the lights at the local airport.

"There is no question the threats are varied and the perpetrators are more sophisticated," he said. "On the upside the response is also getting better."

Transborder co-operation on Internet crime was improving with a number of large multi-country raids demonstrating national enforcement agencies can work well together.

Painter said better detection and more successful prosecutions also needed to be mirrored by appropriate sentencing.

"In the United States certainly sentencing has become more significant in the recognition of the seriousness of Internet crime."

He said hackers were being viewed less as "playful villains" while organized cyber criminals were being hunted with the same vigor as physical

crooks.

Spammers Cashing in on Free Hosting Services

Spammers have found a way to mine free Web-hosting services for cash.

Online scammers have long used free hosting services such as Yahoo Geocities or Tripod as a way to get around e-mail filters that might otherwise recognize their spammy Web sites. But now some enterprising spammers have begun selling each other these free Web pages, according to security vendor McAfee.

For \$25 per week a spammer will sell 50 Web-hosting accounts that can be used to redirect Web traffic to sites that normally would be flagged.

"These 'link providers' create and maintain thousands of free hosting accounts on behalf of the spammers," wrote McAfee's Nick Kelly in a recent posting to McAfee's Avert Labs blog.

"They know that the bigger hosts are unlikely to get blacklisted because they have so many legitimate users," he added.

Scammers also use the free Web pages to try to manipulate search engines, by making it look as if their Web sites are widely linked, said Adam O'Donnell, senior research scientist with Cloudmark, an e-mail filtering company.

While the free hosting providers are taking steps to shut down this abuse, they appear to be fighting a losing battle.

In late June, Cloudmark researchers were seeing about 1500 phony URLs on any given day on one of the most abused free hosting services (O'Donnell declined to name names). One month later, that number had jumped to 3500.

Spammers are simply able to outpace the hosters' security teams, O'Donnell said. "They will gain more hosts for their pages than the company is able to take down," he said.

The free hosters have been placed in a tough position because they do not want to shut down legitimate users, but they also do not have the technical resources to mine spam for Web pages that are being misused, O'Donnell said.

Lately, however, the hosters have been partnering with security vendors to address the problem.

Cloudmark is working with some hosting providers, hoping to sell them "reputation" information that tells them how many times their member URLs are being seen in spam.

McAfee has been providing similar information to an undisclosed service provider, Kelly wrote. "This relationship has cut the abuse observed by us on that provider by over 90 percent in less than a week."

He added, "let's hope those spammers are buying their new watches from pound\$hop rather than Bolex this summer."

EU's Kroes Denies Vendetta Against Microsoft

EU antitrust chief Neelie Kroes on Tuesday rejected an accusation she was pursuing a vendetta against U.S. software giant Microsoft and said she suspected a "coordinated campaign" to discredit her agency.

"Far from pursuing a vendetta against Microsoft, the Commission's actions are guided by the desire to create the most innovation-friendly business climate in Europe to the ultimate benefit of European consumers," the EU Commissioner wrote in a letter published by the Financial Times.

She was responding to a letter published by the newspaper from a Microsoft business partner who accused the EU Commission of "playing games" with Microsoft by raising concerns over the Vista operating system that could delay its launch in Europe.

Last week, Microsoft urged the EU's executive arm to detail why it was concerned about Microsoft foreclosing competition in computer security by tying new security features into Vista.

"There appears to be a coordinated campaign to portray the Commission in a negative light," she said, noting she had seen it suggested that the EU executive might seek to stop Microsoft improving the security of the system.

Microsoft, which hopes the Commission will not require removal of security features in Europe, said the new product remained on course for a public launch in January, but warned that any delay could halve the number of anticipated new jobs.

A Microsoft-commissioned study last week said Vista could drive \$40 billion in economic activity and create 100,000 new jobs in six European countries next year.

The stand-off between the software giant and the Commission is the latest in a lengthy spat between the two.

In 2004, the Commission found Microsoft had abused its market dominance in audiovisual software players and office servers. It forced the U.S. firm to strip out Windows Media Player from its ubiquitous operating system.

The Commission levied a record 497 million euro (\$629 million) fine. In July, EU regulators fined the company a further 280.5 million euros for defying the ruling, which required it to share information on its servers with rivals.

Microsoft faces a further fine of up to 3 million euros a day if found still not in compliance with the ruling.

Sources within Microsoft say the Commission is taking the issue personally, but Kroes denies this.

"This is categorically not the case," she wrote in her letter on Tuesday.

Two engineers at the computer security firm Symantec are coming to Brussels next week to discuss the antitrust threat posed to their company by the upcoming version of Microsoft's Windows, dubbed Vista, a Symantec spokesperson said Thursday.

Vice President for Consumer Engineering Rowan Trollope and a senior engineer in the technology strategy office, Bruce McCorkendale, will press their case to the European antitrust regulator, the European Commission.

Vista is due to launch at the beginning of next year.

The Commission has warned Microsoft about the possible impact on competition of Vista's built-in security software. The regulator fears that by including a sophisticated antivirus program in Vista, this could have a similar effect to the bundling of Media Player with Windows XP.

Two and a half years ago the Commission ruled that the bundling of Media Player into Windows was anticompetitive and ordered Microsoft to launch a second version of Windows without Media Player. It also fined the company nearly \$634 million.

Meanwhile, Adobe Systems has told European Union regulators that Microsoft should be banned from bundling in free competing software for reading and writing electronic documents into Vista, according to a report in The Wall Street Journal Europe.

The paper cites unnamed people familiar with the situation.

Adobe's and Symantec's lobbying moves will come as no surprise to the Commission. Competition Commissioner Neelie Kroes wrote to Microsoft in March expressing concern about Vista's impact on competition, and cited the computer security and document reader and writers sectors as examples of where Microsoft's bundling strategy might pose competition problems.

However, earlier this week Kroes insisted she wasn't calling for Microsoft to launch Vista without any security system.

"I have seen it suggested that the Commission may seek to prevent Microsoft from improving the security of its operating system. This is categorically not the case," she wrote in a letter to the Financial Times newspaper.

Like Earth Day Honors Earth, 'OneWebDay' To Celebrate Online Life

People around the globe will celebrate the power of the Web this Friday in celebrations modeled after Earth Day.

The first OneWebDay will take place with events in New York City, Boston, London, Vancouver, Bulgaria and the Philippines. The events will vary different but they all celebrate what the Web means to individuals, organizations, and communities.

"It has changed our lives, and we need to recognize how important its continued health is to us," the newly formed OneWebDay group states on its Web site. "Because the web is made of machines, we often forget that it's a social world. The web is us, and so it's up to us to protect it."

Susan Crawford, an assistant law professor teaching cyber law and intellectual property law at Cardozo Law School, said during an interview Monday that she was on the train from New York City to Washington, D.C., when she looked around at all of the passengers and wondered if they realized the importance of the Web. Crawford said that corporate and government pressures - like censorship - can threaten access to the Web.

When asked what she believes is the greatest threat, she said: "Taking it for granted. Treating it like a road system. Ignoring the human potential it has and its potential to change lives."

Crawford said she envisioned putting all of the concerns and joys of the Web under one umbrella and holding worldwide celebrations similar to Earth Day events.

She said it is not about one issue, like net neutrality, which she described as "polarizing."

"It's a big tent though," she said, adding that she expects a bit of everything.

Crawford said she is expecting a healthy audience in The Battery in New York City, where people will enjoy new WiFi access in the park and speakers, including Craig Newmark will take to a stage.

"OneWebDay reminds us that the Net is helping people cause some big social change," Newmark said in an interview Monday. "Journalism is changing, and it used to be that the guys who won the wars wrote history. Now anyone can contribute to Wikipedia."

Craigslist will also be featured in a contest for the most creative use of the site.

Organizers are encouraging people to upload videos for viewing on Dabble.com, post photos for a giant online collage and blog about what they are doing to mark the occasion and explain how the Web has changed their lives.

"Leave part of yourself online," Crawford said. "If you can't imagine life without the Web, you should celebrate OneWebDay, because it really has changed everything."

She said the Web has changed her life by giving her a voice and a purpose.

"Everything I do these days has something to do with the Web, and I have a different view of the future because the Web exists," Web said. "I'm much more optimistic. I think that humans can be wildly creative collaborative together without any barriers. It has given me a cause. The Web is my cause because I think it's the thing that's going to help the future."

Participants in Boston will honor Web inventor Tim Berners-Lee.

Bloggers in the Philippines are writing about how the Web has changed their lives, and organizers are holding a conference with speakers addressing issues like data privacy and e-commerce.

Organizers hope to continue the tradition every year on Sept. 22. Crawford said that she would make a big push to spread the event through schools in 2007.

Gonzales Wants Internet Records Saved

Attorney General Alberto Gonzales said Tuesday that Congress should require Internet providers to preserve customer records, asserting that prosecutors need them to fight child pornography.

Gonzales and FBI Director Robert Mueller have met with several Internet providers, including Time Warner Inc.'s AOL, Comcast Corp., Google Inc., Microsoft Corp. and Verizon Communications Inc.

The law enforcement officials have indicated to the companies they must retain customer records, possibly for two years. The companies have discussed strengthening their retention periods - which currently run the gamut from a few days to about a year - to help avoid legislation.

During those meetings, which took place earlier this summer, Justice Department officials asserted that customer records would help them investigate child pornography cases. But the FBI also said during the meetings that such records would help their terrorism investigations, said one person who attended the meetings but spoke on condition of anonymity because the meetings were intended to be private.

Testifying to a Senate panel, Gonzales acknowledged the concerns of some company executives who say legislation might be overly intrusive and encroach on customers' privacy rights. But he said the growing threat of child pornography over the Internet was too great.

"This is a problem that requires federal legislation," Gonzales told the Senate Banking Committee. "We need information. Information helps us make cases."

He called the government's lack of access to customer data the biggest obstacle to deterring child porn.

"We have to find a way for Internet service providers to retain information for a period of time so we can go back with a legal process to get them," he said.

At Tuesday's hearing, Gonzales said he agreed with the sentiment of 49 state attorneys general who in a June letter to Congress expressed support for a federal law that would require longer retention of customer records.

"We respect civil liberties, but we have to harmonize this so we can get more information," he said.

The subject has prompted some alarm among Internet service provider executives and civil liberties groups after the Justice Department took Google to court earlier this year to force it to turn over information on customer searches. Civil liberties groups also have sued Verizon and other telephone companies, alleging that they are working with the government to provide information without search warrants on subscriber calling records.

Justice Department officials have said that any proposal would not call for the content of communications to be preserved and would keep the information in the companies' hands. The data could be obtained by the government through a subpoena or other lawful process.

Boston Cardinal Adopts New Habit With Vatican Blog

Looking to marry the Roman Catholic Church's 2,000-year-history with the modern world's technological bent, Boston's Cardinal Sean O'Malley on Thursday became the first U.S. cardinal to launch a blog.

O'Malley, 62, who wears the plain brown habit and rope belt of his Capuchin order, said he had timed the launch to coincide with a trip to Rome.

"While this is a new venture for me, and for the Archdiocese, I am eager to take advantage of the latest technology and mode of communication to share with Catholics of the Archdiocese my experiences as I return to Rome," O'Malley wrote on his Web log, at (<http://www.cardinaleseansblog.org>).

O'Malley was named to head the troubled Boston archdiocese in 2003 after his predecessor resigned amid charges the church had covered up cases of priests being accused of pedophilia. O'Malley has faced the challenge of restoring public trust after a scandal that cost the archdiocese more than \$150 million and led to the closure of some 60 churches.

Blogs, relatively informal, frequently updated Web sites that tend to dwell on the experiences of a single person, have gained in popularity among Web viewers over the past five years. The estimated millions of blogs in existence are known as the "blogosphere."

It is a relatively new practice for clergy to write blogs. While O'Malley is not the first Catholic leader to do so, he is the highest-ranking, a church official said.

"It's definitely a new phenomenon," said Bill Ryan, spokesman for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. "I have not heard of any cardinal doing this."

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